Hardcopy

September 1987

ABE'S ACES
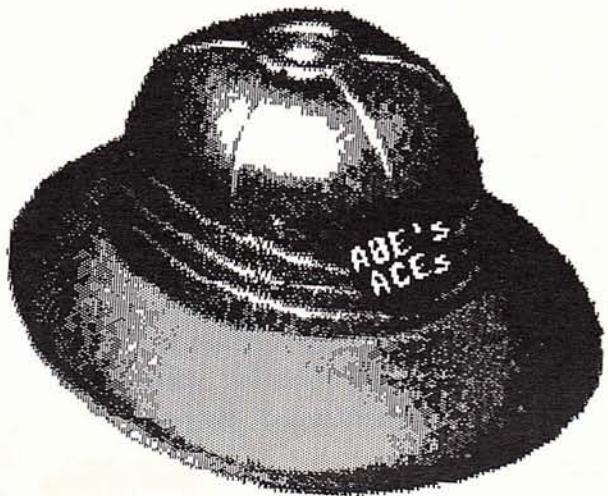
ATARI SAFARI

EDITORIAL

I, for one, am impressed. I mean, really. Here we take a simple idea like like the Atari Safari, and with only a minor amount of prodding from the e-board, we have a great show. Those people who participated are to be commended for a job very well done.

We had only two e-board run displays going (Publishing Partner and the club's BBS). The rest of the show was put on by general members and some invited guests to make for a very educational and worthwhile event. This is what club meetings are all about -- a little planning by the e-board, a lot of participation from club members, and some interesting topics to explore.

I have only two minor complaints about the Safari. First, since I was demonstrating on one of the systems, I couldn't get around to see some of the other systems. I did see a few and what I saw was great. The other thing is that I would have liked to have seen a little better turnout from the general membership. There was a lot to see, but not very many people saw it. Well, it was their loss -- this was the next best thing to another Expo this club is likely to see for a while ... unless we do another Safari again soon.

Onward. Once again, we have very few articles being submitted by the general membership. At least this month I had one to choose

from. It's a good article, one that we are very happy to have. But where are the rest? So far for the contest, we have a grand total of one (count 'em, one) name in the hat for the random (ha!) drawing. And there are three prizes to give away. I'll tell you, this Eric Brodeur fellow has it made in the shade if this keeps up. He is assured up to this point of having his choice of a 520 ST system or a hard disk -- all he has to do is show up at two more meetings before January! Please remember folks, there's no need to wait until December to submit those articles -- I'll take them anytime ... really, just ask anyone. I'm easy. So, until we get a few more submissions, Eric is a shoe-in and this newsletter will remain short (but sweet).

Speaking of short newsletters, did you know that really short, empty newsletters cost more to mail than nice, normal sized ones? Yep, that's because light mail has maximum size restrictions. If a package is large but light, it is classified as odd-shaped, and costs more for special handling. Whether it actually receives any special handling or not is another story, but the extra stamps go on it, nonetheless. That's why the last newsletter you received had thirty-two cents of postage instead of twenty-two. Hmm, maybe we could include complementary bonus bricks in our next light issue ...

As for this newsletter business, we're still making a go at desktop publishing in the hopes that it will improve the quality of its content. In this issue, we have some good reviews and an excellent piece of comedy from another club's newsletter. I really like this sort of

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I've got good news, and bad news.

Let me start with the good news by thanking all of the members who took the time to bring their equipment and something of interest to show at last month's Atari Safari. There was a lot more to see this year than last, and that was because so many members helped out. I'd also like to thank Steve Jones (Jonesware) and his associate for coming all the way to our meeting to give us an advance look at the 8-bit Atari and Apple emulators they are working on for the ST. I was very impressed seeing Atariwriter Plus up and running with all those extra memory banks.

Several members mentioned that they would like to see another Safari soon. As long as we can get enough members interested in bringing something (or what about different members?) then I see no reason why we can't do this twice a year. Let's shoot for early 1988.

The remote call-forwarding station for our BBS is working out very nicely. Since it went in operation the first week in June, we've been averaging fifty calls a month.

For those who haven't heard, this is a number in Allentown (821-9222) that forwards to our BBS in Nazareth. It allows members who are long distance to Nazareth, but local to Allentown, to call the club's

BBS without long distance charges. If you're one of those people, please use the new number. If Nazareth is a local call for you, please continue to use the direct number (759-2683). Also, be aware that this is NOT a second phone line to the BBS. If one number is busy, the other number will also be busy.

We have interesting meetings on computing your roots, computer chess and some guest speakers in the works. And don't forget, to be part of our new contest, you must attend at least three out of the next four meetings. (Sept/Dec)

And now the bad news. We need some help. I don't want to unduly alarm any members, especially those who have just joined in the last month or two BUT...

We need someone with a van or station wagon to help transport our projection TV screen to the meetings. Without the screen, our projection TV isn't worth the space it takes up. Without the TV, members won't be able to see live computer demos or canned video presentations. That's a MAJOR problem!

Gene Celebuski has been kind enough to bring the screen for the last year. Prior to that, I took care of it. Unfortunately I sold my van last year and Gene would like to give someone else a chance to help out. Personally, I think a year is more than enough for any one member to be expected to do this. Can you help us?

The screen is about four feet by six feet and just a few inches thick. It's very light and can easily be handled by one person. Once again I

ON BOARD

with Leon Bonam

Hello out there ! This is your vice-president speaking .

You may ask who I am and just what do I do for your club, so, I'll tell you .

Besides being around to run the meeting when the president is not available, the most pressing business of the V-P is to line up speakers and demonstrati ons for the monthly meetings .

It sounds a simple task , and once it may have been, when club members were eager to share new found software and hardware with everyone else. A while back people actually volunteered to show new found or very useful, or just plain fascinating things at club meetings. Alas, no more .

Now most of you folks own 8-bit systems, and I do too, as well as having an ST . The 8-bit systems are quite powerful and useful for what they are, but do have certain limitations, in particular the amount of memory that is directly addressable. If you wonder what this has to do with my task it is simply t his: there is very little in the way of new products for the 8-bit, and, what there is is not easily demonstrated. Ram disks no matter how large do not make a good show, neither do hard disks. New games and utility software are hard to find because the programmers want to work with larger memory systems that allow

them to put more action and realism in their games and give greater speed and power to their utilities.

The 8-bit is not dead, and will not die as long as people take an interest in it, but you must demonstrate that interest. People have criticized some of our latest presentations for showing too much professionalism but will not do one of their own. We do not expect slick shows, but all of us on the executive board are more than willing to help anyone who wants to do a demonstration, or we will do the demo if you will provide us the materials needed (hardware or software) and some idea of what it does. So you don't even have to do any public speaking, and if you're very shy we won't even tell anyone it was your idea.

Finding a good speaker from the industry is also becoming difficult as most of the top guns are in the midwest, or on the west coast, and are reluctant to travel just to give one talk. It becomes a matter of luck and timing to find someone coming east on business at the right time and with the right commuter connections who is willing to divert for a while and brighten our our lives with his presence.

I feel a certain tension among club members dividing the 8-bit users from the ST users and I can't help but wonder why. This is an Atari club and anything from a game machine to an MS-DOS machine should be of interest to all members. If we reach a point where the only demos available are specific to an ST or PC or even the long rumored TT, we will use them despite the sure chorus of "You're forcing that expensive stuff on us, we want 8-bit stuff."

The MAGIC SAC+

an ST Review by Eric R. Brodeur

What is this thing called the "Magic Sac"? It is a cartridge and software combination from Data Pacific that turns your Atari into an Apple Macintosh. "How can it be done" you ask? Well, when you buy the Magic Sac+ (referred to hereafter as the 'Sac') there is a real-time clock and chip sockets in which you must insert the Macintosh 64k ROMs. If you already own a Mac there is no problem since all you do is remove the chips from the Mac, but if you don't own a Mac then you must buy the ROMs from an Apple dealer. They are priced around $60-$70 and the cartridge itself is $100-$110. There are some retailers that will sell both the ROMs and cartridge together but this is rare.

To use the Sac all you do is insert it in the cartridge port and load the emulator software from the disk supplied to you from Data Pacific. After it partially loads there is a window in which you can select the memory size of the emulated Mac (it is dependent on the amount of RAM in your ST. A standard 520ST can emulate either a 128k or 256k Mac and a 1 meg ST can be set at 512k or 828k. If you have even more memory than that available there are other memory size options. Other selections include where the port in which printer output will go (parallel or serial), and Hard Drive options (if one is connected). If you own a hard disk drive you have the option of booting from it and also

selecting which partitions have Mac software on them. Once these options are set you click on the button called "MAGIC" and the rest of the emulator loads. Once this is done, you insert a Macintosh Boot disk and press any key. From here on, you are in Mac territory...nothing of the ST is apparent.

About 75-80% of all Mac software will run under the Magic Sac and 20 times faster. I am building up a considerable sized Mac library and have only had to delete about ten files that wouldn't run under the Sac. A lot of commercial software runs (like Excel, MS Word 3.0, Ready Set Go!, PageMaker and more) and even more public domain software does too (there is a list on the Help Key II BBS of software that runs with the Sac, but it is very small in comparison to all the software titles that do work however).

Among other files on the Sac disk are disk copiers, a formatter, and clock programs. The Magic Sac disks must be specially formatted before they can be used with it, but they can be either single or double sided depending on the ST drive you have. However, because of the special format, you must use the disk copiers supplied to copy the specially formatted disks. Other copiers may work also but their reliability is definitly lower. The two clock files supplied on the Sac disk let you set the internal clock of the Sac cartridge and also read it back into the ST (thus allowing you to use the Sac's clock whether you are just using the ST or running Mac software).

Right now there is no way for

the ST drives to directly read Mac disks, so you must either download Mac files yourself from BBSs and commercial services or do a Mac to ST disk transfer with a null modem cable. The cable and software to do this is supplied in the Magic Sac package and is very easy to do but only unprotected disks can be ported over, copy protected disks will not function correctly. FYI: the whole disk transfers take about 12-15 minutes. This brings up the question of "How do I boot up the needed Macintosh system files?" The answer is that you need to use a Macintosh at least once to transfer over the System files. An alternative is to copy a Magic disk that already has the needed files from a fellow Saccer (Apple is touchy about the aforementioned coping of the System files so do it at your own risk).

Soon, however, this task will be eliminated since Data Pacific will be releasing a product called the "Transformer" which will directly read and write Macintosh style disks (as well as the current Magic disks). This means that you can put in either a Mac or ST disk and the Transformer will configure itself automatically to that disk format. This piece of hardware will cost about $200 and only one is needed per ST system...not one per drive.

Among other things that you must be aware of is that the Sac does not support the Mac sound chip or the MIDI ports (the reason being that the Mac software makes direct calls into the sound and I/O chips for these options...a big no no with the Magic Sac). For the best screen output you should use a monochrome monitor but the Sac will operate with a color monitor. There are two modes in which the color version operates. Either with a full screen (but reduced resolution) or two split screens that can be flipped between with the arrow keys (but with the same resolution as a Mac screen). As for printing capabilities...normally the Mac outputs to an Apple ImageWriter but a regular dot matrix printer may be used. The printer drivers enabling you to use a regular printer cost $45 from Data Pacific.

This sums up a general overview of the Magic Sac and has hopefully helped explain to you what it is and how it works as well as how well it works. I am very pleased with the Sac and use it greatly and the customer support is EXCELLENT. You may either call Data Pacific by voice and get great help, or logon to GEnie and get online help from other people with the Sac and from David Small himself who created the Magic Sac. Also available there are files that are guaranteed to work with the Sac and thousands more files from the Macintosh SIG. Besides this, you can download the newest system files from Apple Computer for the Mac as well as the latest beta-test versions of the Mac emulator.

If you have any questions or need help I may be reached via the club's BBS (Help Key II), Nak-Ack BBS, and GEnie (at the address RICKERIC).

Where's Your Newsletter Article?

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

by Warren Farina

(reprinted from LA-ACE, June 1987)

BASIC, FORTRAN, COBOL... These programming languages are well known and more or less well-loved throughout the computer industry. However, there are numerous other languages which are less well known, yet still have ardent devotees. In fact, these little-known languages generally have the most fanatic admirers. For those who wish to know more about these obscure languages, and why they are obscure, I present the following catalog:

SIMPLE... is an acronym for "Sheer Idiot's Monopurpose Programming Linguistic Environment." This language, developed at Hanover's College for Technical Misfits, was designed to make it impossible to write code with any errors in it. The commands of this language are therefore confined to BEGIN, END and STOP. Furthermore, no matter how the commands are arranged, it is impossible to receive a syntax error.

Programs written in SIMPLE do nothing useful. Thus, they achieve results similar to programs written in other languages without the tedious frustrating process of testing and debugging.

SLOBOL... is best known for its tremendously slow compiler. While many compilers allow you to take a coffee break while they compile, SLOBOL allows you to travel to Bolivia to pick up the coffee.

Forty-three programmers are known to have died of boredom while sitting at their console and waiting for a SLOBOL program to be compiled. Weary SLOBOL programmers often turn to a related (but infinitely faster) language, COCAINE.

VALGOL... was developed in Southern California's San Fernando Valley in the hope of educating Valley girls in programming.

VALGOL commands include REALLY, LIKE, WELL, TUBULAR, GROSS ME OUT and Y'KNOW. Variables are assigned with the =LIKE and =TOTALLY operators. Other operators include the "California Booleans" FERSURE and NOWAY. Repetitions of code are handled in FOR-SURE loops. Here is a sample VALGOL program:

```
14 LIKE, Y'KNOW (I MEAN) START
%% IF PI A =LIKE BITCHEN AND
O1 B =LIKE UBULAR AND
9 C =LIKE GRODY**MAX
4K (FERSURE)**2 18 THEN
4I FOR I =LIKE 1 TO OH MAYBE 100
86 DO WAH + (DITTY**2)
9 BARF(I) = TOTALLY GROSS(OUT)
17 SURE
IF LIKE BAG THIS PROGRAM
? REALLY
$$ LIKE TOTALLY(Y'KNOW)
```

VALGOL is somewhat declaimed by its users for its unfriendly error messages. For example, when the user makes a syntax error, it replies with the message "GAG ME WITH A SPOON."

LAIDBACK... was developed at the (now defunct) Marin County Center for T'ai Chi, Mellowness and Computer Programming.

PUBLISHING PARTNER

an ST review by Chris Scullion

Desktop publishing. It's all the rage these days. Everybody who's anybody is doing it, talking about it, or needing it desperately. It's selling Macs left and right (about the only thing you can do with those silly things, anyway). It's selling laser printers like they were going out of style.

Well, now the Atari ST can do it, too. There's no real trick to it. All you need is a nice piece of software that lets you manipulate text with proportional character spacing, add pictures in the middle, and otherwise compose pretty pages for printing on a good quality printer (impact or laser). Publishing Partner from SoftLogic does all of this, and more.

It's the first of it's kind on the ST, so I can forgive some of its faults. It does evrything you NEED a publishing package to do. It's fully GEM based ... that's nice. It has lots of text formatting and modification options ... that's nice. It can take DEGAS and NEOCHROME pictures, crop them, size them, and put them anywhere on your printed page ... that's nice. Youe can draw with it directly ... that's nice. You can even use it as a word processor if you have to ... that's nice, too. It crashes occassionally ... that's, uh, no, that's NOT nice.

The fact is, it has a few bugs left. I've found that trying to route text from one page to the next can cause the occasional bombs on the screen.

"Routing" means that, if an ASCII file doesn't fit in one text column, you can "pick up" the overflow text and put it down in another column. PP will then keep track of where one column ends and the next begins. However, when these text columns are on different physical pages, it seems to have a little trouble. After a few attempts, it did work, but the eventual solution was by no means obvious.

Another problem we noticed ("we" meaning Ralph and I) was that "what you see is ..." not necessarily what you get. One of the primary reasons for the delay of the last issue of this newsletter was that, what appeared to be a normal PP document would not print at the laser printer. Upon further experimentation, I discovered that it didn't print correctly on a dot matrix printer either. And yet, the document appeared fine on the screen. In general, I found it difficult to get a good printout started. But once it IS started, it goes off without a hitch. Figuring out exactly where the printer drivers and font files have to be on a disk is not made too clear in the otherwise good documentation. But it DOES work, and that's important to note.

This is typical of all the minor bugs in PP. They ARE minor, and they can all be "worked around," avoided. So, that makes it a very workable program, overall. The biggest problem with the program is not the program itself, but the lack of character fonts available. SoftLogic provides only the Helvetica font for actual printing ... well they provided others, but the manual warns you that the others don't work too well, and that's no lie! SoftLogic says they

thing ... anytime we can have a little fun with our computers, whether it be games or jokes, it helps -- helps break the self-induced pressure to understand these beasties and helps remind us that they ARE tools, not an end in themselves. I sometimes have trouble keeping that in mind since I am surrounded by them all day at work, but an article like "Watch Your Language," and games like "Hitchhiker's Guide..." help to bring things back into prespective for me.

Till next time.

ask, can you help us? If you don't step forward, no one else will.

More bad news. Two of our E-Board members have had changes in their jobs that involve weekend work. Neither will be able to make many, if any, of our general meetings. For that reason both Ralph Fenner (membership) and Curt Lopez (secretary) have submitted resignations. We need two club members, at least 18 years of age, to take these two positions. PLEASE, contact me now and get involved with the running of this club. If we lose a few more board members, we will have no choice but to seriously consider the disbanning of ABE's ACEs. The club's not perfect but do you really want to see it cease? If so, do nothing. If not, GET INVOLVED!

Nothing in this world is static, new things come along and we must accept them. Remember that most of the ST users had or have 8-bit machines, and while they are now a minority, they also deserve our attention in terms of doing a meeting or two for them.

I would like to thank all who volunteered their time and equipment for the Atari Safari. I didn't really thank you all at the meeting, but if you were as busy as I was, you probably didn't get a chance to see it all either. If we can keep this kind of sharing alive, I see this becoming an annual event.

For any of you who shop at the Micro-Cottage, be sure to bring your club ID card along and use it for an extra discount.

See you soon.

This center was ideal for programmers who liked to soak in hot tubs while they worked. However, and unfortunately, few programmers could survive there long, since they outlawed Coca Cola and pizza in favor of bean curd and Perrier.

Many mourn the demise of LAIDBACK because of its reputation as a gentle and non-threatening language. For example, LAIDBACK responded to user syntax errors with the message "SORRY MAN, I CAN'T DEAL WITH THAT."

C-... was named for the grade its creator recevied when he submitted it to his professor in Graduate-Programming Class. C- is best described as a low-level programming language. In fact, the language generally requires more C-statements than machine code statements to execute a given task. In this respect, it is very similar to COBOL.

FIFTH... is a precision mathematical language in which data types refer to quantities. The data types range from CC, OUNCE, SHOT and JIGGER to FIFTH (hence the name of the language,) LITER, MAGNUM, and GROTTO. Commands refer to ingredients such as CHABLIS, CHARDONNAY, CABERNET, GIN, VERMOUTH, VODKA, SCOTCH and WHATEVERSAROUND.

There are many versions of FIFTH, each of which reflects the sophistication and financial status of its users. Commands in the ELITE dialect include VSOP and LAFIATTE, while commands in the GUTTER dialect include HOOTCH and RIPPLE. The latter dialect is a favorite of frustrated FORTH programmers.

LITHP... ith unremarkable, thave for the abthence of the letter ETH in itth character thet, yet it ith thaid to be utheful in procethhthing lithtth. Now ithn't that thpecial?

ST SIG MEETINGS

Starting in October, the ST SIG will meet immediately following our general meetings at the community college.

will be providing more fonts and a font creation program in the near future, but I haven't seen it yet. There are some public domain fonts available, and they seem to work quite well, so I guess you can "work around" this problem, too.

I like Publishing Partner. It does everything you need a desktop publishing program to do. But, I'm afraid that, once I see Fleet Street Publisher, I may become less lenient.

ABE's ACE's Meetings

September 12

October 10

November 14

Theater

December 12

Cafeteria

!!! CONTEST !!!

Don't forget about the new club contest! It could prove *VERY* profitable for you!

First Prize: your choice of an Atari 520 ST (monochrome) or a 20 Mbyte hard disk drive

Second Prize: an Avatex 1200 baud modem

Third Prize: A gift certificate at Gemini

All you have to do to get your name in the random drawing is attend three of the four club meetings between September and December and write a 500 to 1000 word article for this newsletter. It's that simple!

ABE's ACEs

Allentown Bethlehem Easton's Atari Computer Enthusiasts is an independent user group organized and run by owners of Atari Computers. Atari is a trademark of Atari Corp.; all references should be so noted.

If you would like more information about ABE's ACEs, write us at the club's address or call the club Hotline at the number listed below.

Newsletter

This newsletter is published by ABE's ACEs on a bi-monthly basis (six issues per year). Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and not ABE's ACEs. All unsigned articles should be attributed to the Editor. This newsletter is provided free to our membership and on an exchange basis to other user groups. Original articles from our newsletter may be reprinted in other newsletters provided credit is given to both author and source.

Submissions to the newsletter may be made via the Help Key II, at the general meetings, or by mail to the club's P.O. Box. For more information, leave messages on the Help Key II or call the club Hotline.

Special Projects

Ralph A. Fenner ------- (215) 868-6459

Executive Committee

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	(215) 866-2459
Newsletter Editor	Chris Scullion
	Unlisted

Library Staff

8-Bit Disks	John Douglas
	Robert MacGregor
16-Bit Disks	Chris C. Andrews
Paper Library	Open

Meeting Set-Up

Open

Club Phone Numbers

| Help Key II BBS | (215) 759-2683 |
| Club Hotline (Voice) | (215) 759-3336 |

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